



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9

Queens Borough Hall
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Room 310-A
Kew Gardens, NY 11424

(718) 286-2686

Fax (718) 286-2685

Email: qn09@cb.nyc.gov

Website: www.nyc.gov/queenscb9

Facebook: [@communityboard9](https://www.facebook.com/communityboard9)

Sherry Algreto, Chairperson * James S. McClelland, District Manager * Donovan Richards Jr., Borough President

DECEMBER 9, 2025, MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING ROOM 200, 120-55 QUEENS BOULEVARD, KEW GARDENS, NY 11424

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

ABSENCES AS OF APRIL 2025-MARCH 2026

2nd # Represents Absences as of January-December 2025 (Borough President's Attendance)

Inderpaul Ahluwalia	(0)(0)	Stephen Forte	(1)(1)	Regina Santoro	(3)(3)
Faiuze Ali	(2)(2)	Vanessa Fuentes	(0)(0)	Himmat Singh	(0)(0)
Dulal Bhattacharjee	(1)(1)	Daniel Grieve	(0)(0)	Jarnail Singh	(2)(2)
Kirpal Billing	(1)(1)	Sylvia Hack	(0)(0)	Ragbir Singh	(0)(0)
Visnoonand Bisram	(2)(2)	Alicia Hassin	(2)(2)	Esta-Joy Sydell	(0)(0)
Zoila Bofill	(1)(1)	Joseph Iaboni	(0)(0)	Andrew Taranto	(0)(0)
John Carter	(1)(1)	Carmela Isabella	(2)(2)	Harpreet Toor	(2)(2)
Swapan Chakraborty	(2)(2)	Fahlovi Noman	(3)(3)	Alyssa Velez	(2)(2)
Rev. Ruben Cruz	(2)(2)	Kevin O'Leary	(0)(0)	Keith Villanueva	(0)(0)
Joan DeCamp	(1)(1)	Ijazz Rahim	(1)(1)	Seth Welins	(1)(1)
Stephen Esposito	(3)(3)	Philip Ross	(0)(0)	Stacey Yearwood	(0)(0)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Sherry Algreto	(1)(1)	Marilyn Custodio	(2)(2)	Cristal Rivera	(1)(1)
Maricela Cano	(1)(1)	Warlito DeLeon	(1)(1)	Matthew Singh	(2)(2)
Rick Chetram	(1)(1)	Hilary Dvorkin	(2)(2)	Mohinder Singh	(4)(4)
Daniel Chu	(1)(1)	Albert Gamarra	(2)(2)	J. Richard Smith	(1)(1)
Andrea Crawford	(3)(3)	Rabbi Daniel Pollack	(3)(3)		

ALSO PRESENT

James McClelland, District Manager
Irina Barayeva, Community Coordinator

LEGISLATORS/REPRESENTATIVES, CITY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo
Max Leonardo, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman
Michael Carlier, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
Melissa Thomas, Rep. Council Member Joann Ariola
Rokeya Akhter, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz
Frederice Latchman, Rep. Senator Leroy Comrie
Rohanee Gocool, Rep. Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar
Simone Zito, Rep. NYC Mayor Eric Adams

Capt. Evan Galone, NYPD, 102nd Pct. Executive Officer
Det. Nick Salamone, NYPD 102nd Pct.
PO Chris DeMarco. Evan Galone, NYPD 102nd Pct.

The board observed a moment of silence to commemorate the passing of Chair Algreto's mother.

1. Opening of Meeting and Reading of Minutes

1st Vice Chair Taranto asked if there were any corrections/additions to November 13th, 2025, minutes and motions.

There were none. Stephen Esposito motioned to accept the minutes as presented. Swapan Chakraborty seconded the motion.

Motion # 1: To adopt minutes as presented

Vote # 1: 31 in favor and 2 abstentions

The minutes were adopted as presented.

2. District Manager's Report-James McClelland

DM McClelland wished happy birthday to: Dulal Bhattacharjee, John Carter and Daniel Chu and a happy holiday season to all.

The 1st Vice Chair added a brief remark, noting that he had the pleasure of joining many attendees on Jamaica Avenue during last week's Christmas tree lighting. 1st Vice Chair Taranto congratulated the BID, DM McClelland and all those involved for their efforts in organizing the event, describing it as very special and a wonderful success.

3. Public Forum

Andrew Smith, Richmond Hill Resident, spoke regarding the Board's recent vote to reopen Freedom Drive to vehicular traffic. He expressed strong disappointment with the decision and stated his support for keeping Freedom Drive car-free. Mr. Smith cited studies and data indicating that Open Streets reduce crime and illegal dumping, increase foot traffic, and improve pedestrian safety, particularly for access to Victory Field.

He referenced a petition he submitted with over 800 verified signatures, primarily from residents within the community district, and stated that support also came from school principals, PTAs, the NYC Department of Transportation, and the Parks Department. Mr. Smith raised concerns that community input and supporting materials were not fully considered by the Board.

He inquired as to whether a traffic study had been requested from DOT to address concerns about increased neighborhood traffic and suggested that issues related to FDNY access and gates could be resolved without reopening the roadway to cars. Mr. Smith emphasized the growing number of families, students, cyclists, and park users in the area and warned that restoring vehicular traffic could pose safety risks. He concluded by urging the Board to reconsider the decision and thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

4. 102nd Precinct Briefing

Evan Galan, the newly promoted Captain and the Executive Officer of the 102nd Precinct, stated the following:

"I am new to the command, but I am from South Queens and have lived there for many years, so while this area is new to me, I am pleased to be here.

Captain Maldonado asked me to share an important update with you. Over the past few weeks, we have seen an increase in auto thefts—not only in the 102nd Precinct, but citywide—particularly involving Honda CR-Vs.

If you or someone you know owns a Honda CR-V, we strongly recommend keeping the key fob as far away from the vehicle as possible, especially at night. What we believe is occurring, citywide, is that individuals are using electronic devices to amplify the signal from the key fob, allowing them to unlock and start the vehicle.

To help prevent this, there are inexpensive protective devices available online, such as Faraday bags or Faraday boxes. These are small pouches or containers that block the signal from your key fob. They typically cost between \$10 and \$15 and are well worth the investment. This recommendation applies to all vehicles, not just Honda CR-Vs.”

DM McClelland congratulated the newly promoted Detective Nick Salamone and thanked Captain Galan and his colleagues from the 102nd Precinct for joining the board this evening.

5. Public Safety & Consumer Affairs Committee Report/Public Hearing (Letters of Intent Received)

a. On Premises Wine, Beer & Cider License Application – New

Taqueria Pantitlan
87-12 Woodhaven Boulevard
Woodhaven, NY 11421

No Speakers

Motion # 2: Not to oppose the New on Premises Wine, Beer & Cider License Application

Vote # 2: 32 in favor and 1 abstention

b. On Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License Application – Renewal

Extacy Lounge LLC
77-01 Jamaica Avenue
Woodhaven, NY 11421

No Speakers

6. Old/New Business

DM McClelland stated that a special guest speaker, Assistant Chief Christopher McIntosh, Queens Borough South Commander, will be speaking at the January 13th, 2026 board meeting.

EJ Sydel stated that her question about whether the Police Department had ever conducted a study on traffic and crime on Freedom Drive remained unanswered. She requested the following information: data from the period before the street was opened compared to when it was closed, including any traffic incidents, crime incidents, or other relevant occurrences. She said that providing this information would be fair, transparent, and important.

Det. Salamone announced the 102nd Pct. Annual Toy Giveaway taking place on Wednesday, December 10th 5-8 PM in front of the 102 Precinct. Last year more than 1,000 children received toys, and this year even more generous donations were received. He thanked everyone who contributed.

This event is in partnership with the Detective Brian Simonson Foundation. For those who may not know, Detective Brian Simonson was killed on February 12, 2019, during a T-Mobile robbery here in the 102 Precinct. His wife and mother will be in attendance. The foundation does so much for the community, and it would mean a lot to show support in return.

Regina Santoro stated that multiple requests for a traffic study on Freedom Drive were submitted over the past five years, including approximately five years ago, three years ago, and again last year. No response was received. When a response was eventually received, it stated that there was “no change in traffic.”

Safety concerns were highlighted at the corner of 109th Street and 85th Avenue, where several accidents have been recorded, including overturned vehicles and pedestrians being struck. Multiple attendees confirmed firsthand knowledge of incidents at this location. Several families from 109th Street spoke in favor of reopening the road, despite it being the first block after Freedom Drive where traffic descends.

Three separate requests were also submitted to the DOT. DOT had indicated that warning signs would be installed advising that Freedom Drive would be reopened through May, but a timeline for installation has not been provided.

Ms. Santoro stated that she is not aware of any study conducted by the 102nd Pct. Based on personal experience, violent crimes occurred on the street; however, nearly 80 years prior to the street being opened, traffic flow did not significantly affect the area. It was suggested that returning to that previous condition could be feasible. It was acknowledged that traffic speeds and driving behavior are significantly more aggressive now than they were five to six years ago.

John Carter stated that he voted to close Freedom Drive based on personal history and firsthand knowledge of the corner, having grown up there and spent significant time at the P.S. 66 schoolyard. He noted that a current resident, Mrs. Adams, was present at the meeting.

Mr. Carter discussed the recent approval of three casinos, including two in close proximity and one in the Bronx, and expressed concerns despite having voted in favor. These concerns included traffic and congestion, citing discussions with casino representatives who acknowledged access issues at parking facilities.

He also raised issues regarding the increasing connection between gambling and professional sports, citing past and recent gambling-related controversies and potential impacts on integrity.

Additionally, he referenced reports on gambling restrictions in local sports and cited information from the Office of Addiction Services indicating that approximately five percent of the city’s population may be vulnerable to gambling addiction, affecting families as well as individuals.

He concluded by stating that these issues warrant ongoing monitoring, particularly with respect to any future expansion.

Alissia Velez thanked EJ and Regina for revisiting the discussion on Freedom Drive and stated that she voted against the compromise due to concerns raised by parents and school principals about child safety. She suggested establishing an ongoing process to monitor and document incidents in the area and maintaining communication with the board and the public, with the possibility of coordinating with the 102nd Precinct, to ensure accountability and evaluate the impact of reopening the street.

Kirpal Billing stated that the primary concern is the safety of children traveling to and from school and crossing Freedom Drive. While similar issues exist on other streets, they are often addressed through traffic restrictions during school arrival and dismissal times; a similar approach could be considered here.

Potential measures include time-based parking restrictions, speed-control devices, speed cameras, and controlled access that allows traffic during certain hours. To date, there has not been a focused discussion on school crossings, approaches to the school, and overall safety conditions on Freedom Drive.

He requested a dedicated session to develop a comprehensive safety plan to make Freedom Drive safe and usable, rather than leaving it closed and underutilized as a public investment.

1st Vice Chair Taranto recognized legislative representatives.

Ann Marie Castella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo

Briefly reported on two bills sponsored by Senator Addabbo that were recently signed into law by the Governor. One bill expands comprehensive insurance coverage for lung cancer screenings, supporting early detection and improved public health outcomes.

The second bill, S.5935-B, bans illegal dual-currency online sweepstakes casinos in New York State, prohibiting the operation, promotion, or profiting from unauthorized online gambling activities.

Max Leonardo, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman

Stated that the Council Member received many strong suggestions for Participatory Budgeting and looks forward to the community voting on the proposed projects in the new year.

Michael Carlier, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Provided a community update on behalf of Borough President Donovan Richards. He highlighted a hurricane relief drive collecting baby supplies, vitamins, medications, and bedding through January 5. Mr. Carlier also announced a holiday Toy Drive collecting new toys and board games through December 15, with an in-person event and tree lighting at the Helen Marshall Cultural Center.

Additional holiday events include a Hanukkah Menorah Lighting on December 17 and a Kwanzaa celebration on December 30.

He also announced that the Community Board application process reopens January 5 and closes February 13.

Melissa Thomas, Rep. Council Member Joann Ariola, provided the following updates:

- Homelessness on Trains: The Council Member has been in contact with the MTA, NYPD Transit Bureau, and the Department of Homeless Services regarding the issue of unhoused individuals sleeping on trains, which affects both commuters and those experiencing homelessness. Outreach efforts are ongoing with Transit Bureau and Homeless Services staff visiting train stations each morning to offer services.
- Freedom Drive: Freedom Drive is expected to reopen shortly. DOT has indicated that the signal issue has been resolved, and coordination with the Parks Department is underway to facilitate the street opening.
- Cannabis Dispensaries: The office continues to work with the Cannabis Management Office to ensure that community boards and local civic associations are notified prior to the opening of any dispensaries. Assembly Member Rajkumar has assisted in this effort.
- Community Cleanups: Through the ACE cleanup program, the Council Member has extended services to the western portion of the Woodhaven BID to address issues in areas heavily affected by the nearby homeless shelter.
- Ozone Park Office: The Ozone Park office is temporarily closed due to major plumbing issues. Operations are currently running out of the Rockaway office, but the public can still reach the office at 718-738-1083.

Rokeya Akhter, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, provided updates.

She reported on the city's largest gang takedown, resulting in a 97-count indictment and 32 arrests of a violent Queens gang, investigated with the NYPD's help since November 2021.

She also shared cannabis enforcement updates in Community Board 9, noting 53 actions since 2022, including 36 arrests and 24 inspections. A recent October action at 86-04 117th Street led to three arrests and the seizure of 70 pounds of cannabis products.

Ms. Akhtar encouraged the community to report suspicious or illegal activity and offered direct assistance.

Frederice Latchman, Rep. Senator Leroy Comrie, provided a brief update regarding community services and legal assistance:

- Heat Assistance: The office is providing heat assistance during the winter months. A heat specialist is available twice a week to assist residents with applications. Office staff are also available to help with applications for anyone in need.
- Legal Assistance (NYLAG): On December 1, the office hosted its first event with the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG). Residents were able to meet with NYLAG representatives to discuss a variety of legal matters, including debt issues, foreclosure, and wills. The office can facilitate connections with NYLAG, or other legal organizations as needed.
- Resources for Residents: Flyers are available for both heat assistance and homeowners seeking legal support. Residents are encouraged to use these resources and participate in NYLAG's intake clinic for assistance with homeownership-related legal issues.

Simone Zito, Rep. NYC Mayor Eric Adams, provided an update from the Mayor's Office.

She noted that she recently replaced Kevin Morris and is serving temporarily due to the transition to the new administration. Currently, there are no new updates to report. Community members with questions or concerns can reach her via email at szito@cityhall.nyc.gov. She will either address the issues directly or pass them along to the incoming staff as appropriate.

7. Public Forum *no speakers*

Stephen Forte made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Joe laboni seconded it.

The meeting was adjourned by the 1st Vice Chair at 7:59 PM.